

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Elisa Vitale, Development Review Specialist
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director, Development Review
DATE: April 22, 2022
SUBJECT: BZA 20698, 2917 Knox Place SE, Special Exception relief to construct a new residential development and for relief from the Minimum Required Parking

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the requested special exception relief pursuant to Subtitles X § 901 and C § 5201 from the following:

- Subtitle U § 421, special exception review for all new multi-family projects in the RA-1 zone.; and
- Subtitle C § 703.2, special exception review for parking relief (4 spaces required; 0 spaces proposed).

The Applicant should submit the following documentation prior to the public hearing:

- More detailed landscaping plan with plant species identified and quantities specified;
- More detailed existing and proposed grading plans with contours labeled;
- Revised floor plans identifying the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) units; and
- Revised site plan identifying the long- and short-term bicycle parking.

The Applicant should also address design concerns noted in this report, including building entrance location, pedestrian walkways, and landscaping.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Applicant	Rupsha 2011, LLC
Address	2917 Knox Place SE
Legal Description	Square 5741, Lot 0105
Ward / ANC	8 / 8B
Zone	RA-1 - provides for areas predominantly developed with low- to moderate-density development, including detached dwellings by right, and rowhouses and low-rise apartments by special exception.

Lot Characteristics	The rectangular property measures 13,083 square feet in area and is bounded by Knox Place SE to the southeast and adjoining properties to the north, west, and south.
Existing Development	The site is currently unimproved.
Adjacent Properties	The adjacent properties to the north and south are multi-unit apartment buildings.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood is residential in character.
Proposed Development	The Applicant is proposing to construct a 16-unit apartment building.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND REQUESTED RELIEF

RA-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed ¹	Relief
Lot Area F § 201.4	As prescribed by the Board	13,083 sq. ft.	13,083 sq. ft.	None required
Lot Width F § 201.4	As prescribed by the Board	38 ft. 10 in.	38 ft. 10 in.	None required
FAR F § 302 and C § 1002.3	0.9 max. 1.08 (IZ) max.	N/A	1.08	None required
Height F § 303	40 ft. / 3 stories max.	N/A	38 ft. / 3 stories	None required
Lot Occupancy F § 304	40% max.	N/A	40%	None required
Rear Yard F § 305	20 ft. min.	N/A	131 ft. 2 in.	None required
Side Yard F § 306.2(a)	One side yard req. 3 in. / ft. of height but not less than 8 ft. min.; 9 ft. 6 in. min. required	N/A	South – 9 ft. 6 in.	None required
GAR F § 307	0.4 min.	N/A	0.4	None required
Vehicle Parking C § 701	1 per 3 units in excess of 4 units = 4 spaces min.	N/A	0 spaces	Special Exception
Bicycle Parking C § 802	Long Term 1 per 3 units = 5 min.	N/A	6 spaces	None required
	Short Term 1 per 20 units = 1 min.	N/A	0 spaces	None requested

IV. ANALYSIS

Subtitle U § 421 requires special exception review for new multifamily residential developments in the RA-1 zone, subject to the criteria listed below.

¹ Information provided by the Applicant, Exhibit 17, January 20, 2022.

Special Exception for New Residential Development – U § 421

421 NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS (RA-1 and RA-6)

421.1 In the RA-1 and RA-6 zones, all new residential developments, except those comprising all one-family detached and semi-detached dwellings, shall be reviewed by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as special exceptions under Subtitle X, in accordance with the standards and requirements in this section.

The application proposes a new multi-family development, a use that is permitted by special exception in the RA-1 zone.

421.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the relevant District of Columbia agencies for comment and recommendation as to the adequacy of the following:

(a) Existing and planned area schools to accommodate the numbers of students that can be expected to reside in the project; and

The Office of Zoning referred the application to the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) on February 10, 2022 (Exhibit 23). OSSE did not provide comments, but the 2020-2021 DME Master Facilities Plan provides the following utilization data for the relevant public schools:

Stanton Elementary – 65% utilization;

Kramer Middle – 39% utilization; and

Anacostia High – 39% utilization.

(b) Public streets, recreation, and other services to accommodate the residents that can be expected to reside in the project.

The Office of Zoning referred the application to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) on February 10, 2022 (Exhibit 23). DDOT had not submitted a report to the record at the time OP conducted its review. The Applicant is requesting parking relief, which is analyzed below. The Applicant should label the long- and short-term bicycle parking on the plans.

The Office of Zoning referred the application to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) on February 10, 2022 (Exhibit 23). DPR had not provided comments at the time this report was drafted. OP notes that the Hillcrest Recreation Center is located to the northeast of the subject property and the Fort Stanton Recreation Center is located to the west of the subject property.

421.3 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the Office of Planning for comment and recommendation on the site plan, arrangement of buildings and structures, and provisions of light, air, parking, recreation, landscaping, and grading as they relate to the surrounding neighborhood, and the relationship of the proposed project to public plans and projects.

The Applicant is proposing to construct a new multi-unit apartment building that would measure 38 feet and three stories in height. The building would have a lot occupancy of 40%, a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.08, and a rear yard of 131 feet and 2 inches. The Applicant is proposing one side yard, to the south of the building, measuring nine feet and six inches. The proposed building would conform to the RA-1 development standards and would be adjacent to other multi-unit apartment buildings in the surrounding neighborhood

The Applicant is proposing two front entries on the north side of the building. The Applicant should consider relocating the entries to the south side of the building, which would place them opposite the entries at the adjoining property to the south, 2732 Langston Place SE. If the Applicant makes this revision, the air conditions units should be relocated from the southeast elevation to northeast elevation.

The Applicant should include a pedestrian walkway around the entire building and provide a seating area in and access to the wooded area at the north end of the property. The Applicant should confirm that landscaped areas along the building façade are at least three feet wide at all times to ensure vegetation survival.

The Applicant is not proposing to provide parking on-site and has requested special exception relief, which is analyzed below. The Applicant is showing the trash enclosure located at the west end of the building. The Applicant is required to provide long- and short-term bicycle parking; however they are not labeled on the plans.

421.4 In addition to other filing requirements, the developer shall submit to the Board of Zoning Adjustment with the application a site plan and set of typical floor plans and elevations, grading plan (existing and final), landscaping plan, and plans for all new rights-of-way and easements.

The Applicant has provided only very cursory plans indicating landscaping and grading. Additional information should be included on the landscape plan to include plant material proposed, the Applicant's narrative states that shrubs and grasses are proposed but details should be provided. While OP notes that the site is generally flat, the Applicant should clarify whether any grading is proposed on the site and label the contours on the grading plans.

Finally, the Applicant should label the long- and short-term bicycle parking and identify the required IZ units on the plans.

Special Exception from the Minimum Parking Requirements– C § 703

703.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant a full or partial reduction in the number of required parking spaces, as a special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and subject to the applicant's demonstration to the Board's satisfaction of at least one (1) of the following:

(a) Due to the physical constraints of the property, the required parking spaces cannot be provided either on the lot or within six hundred feet (600 ft.) of the lot in accordance with Subtitle C § 701.8;

The Applicant has not stated whether parking could be provided within 600 feet of the lot.

(b) The use or structure is particularly well served by mass transit, shared vehicle, or bicycle facilities;

The property would be served by several Metrobus routes, which run to the east along Alabama Avenue, SE.

(c) Land use or transportation characteristics of the neighborhood minimize the need for required parking spaces;

Not applicable.

- (d) *Amount of traffic congestion existing or which the parking for the building or structure would reasonably be expected to create in the neighborhood;*

Not applicable.

- (e) *The nature of the use or structure or the number of residents, employees, guests, customers, or clients who would reasonably be expected to use the proposed building or structure at one time would generate demand for less parking than the minimum parking standards;*

Not applicable.

- (f) *All or a significant proportion of dwelling units are dedicated as affordable housing units;*

Not applicable

- (g) *Quantity of existing public, commercial, or private parking, other than on-street parking, on the property or in the neighborhood, that can reasonably be expected to be available when the building or structure is in use;*

Not applicable

- (h) *The property does not have access to an open public alley, resulting in the only means by which a motor vehicle could access the lot is from an improved public street and either:*
- (1) *A curb cut permit for the property has been denied by the Public Space Committee; or*
 - (2) *Any driveway that could access an improved public street from the property would violate any regulation of this chapter, of the parking provisions of any other subtitle in the Zoning Regulations, or of Chapters 6 or 11 of Title 24 DCMR;*

The subject property does not have access to an alley and does not have an existing curb cut.

- (i) *The presence of healthy and mature canopy trees on or directly adjacent to the property; or*

Not applicable.

- (j) *The nature or location of an Historic Resource precludes the provision of the number of parking spaces required by this chapter; or providing the required number of parking spaces would result in significant architectural or structural difficulty in maintaining the integrity and appearance of the Historic Resource.*

Not applicable.

703.3 *Any reduction in the required number of parking spaces granted under Subtitle C § 703.2 shall be:*

- (a) *Proportionate to the reduction in parking demand demonstrated by the applicant;*
- (b) *Limited to the number of spaces that the applicant demonstrates cannot reasonably be provided on the site as proposed to be developed in the application; and*

- (c) *Limited to relief from the minimum number of parking spaces required by this section and shall not provide relief from the location, access, size or layout, screening, or other requirements of this chapter.*

The Applicant is requesting relief because the property does not have alley access and does not have an existing curb cut. Without access to the property, no parking spaces can be provided on the site.

703.4 Any request for a reduction of more than four (4) spaces from the required number of parking spaces shall include a transportation demand management plan approved by the District Department of Transportation, the implementation of which shall be a condition of the Board of Zoning Adjustment's approval.

The Applicant is requesting relief for four (4) spaces; therefore, the requirement for a Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM) plan would not apply.

General Special Exception Criteria – X § 901

X § 901.2(a) [Granting the special exception] Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;

The Applicant is proposing a 16-unit apartment building, which is permitted via special exception in the RA-1 zone. The building would conform to the RA-1 development standards. The Applicant would comply with the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) requirements and would provide two IZ units, the location of which should be shown on the building plans. Granting the special exception would be in harmony with the purpose of the Zoning Regulations.

X § 901.2(b) [Granting the special exception] Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;

The surrounding neighborhood is residential in character with other multi-unit apartment buildings adjacent to the subject property. The proposed building would provide the required rear and side yards and would be within the maximum permitted building height for the RA-1 zone.

With respect to the parking relief, the property does not have alley access and does not have a curb cut. The property is adjacent to a Priority Corridor Network Metrobus Route and would be well-served by transit.

Granting the requested special exception relief should not affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

Comments from other District agencies had not been submitted to the record at the time this report was drafted.

VI. ANC COMMENTS

Comments from ANC 8B had not been submitted to the record at the time this report was drafted.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Comments from the community had not been submitted to the record at the time this report was drafted.

Location Map

